DS624 Theology and Doctrine in the United Church of Canada
United Church of Canada Denominational Studies (2.0 credits)
Vancouver School of Theology

Class dates: January 22 & 29; February 5 & 19; March 11, 18 & 25
2:00 – 5:00 pm.

Instructor: Hyuk Cho, Th. D.
e-mail: hyuk.trinity@gmail.com

Purpose
This course is designed to contribute to the educational preparation of learned church leaders for
the ministry of nurturing the living faith of communities in the United Church of Canada (UCC).
Course material concentrates on theology, doctrine and policy in The United Church of Canada.
Participants will work with theologies and doctrines both historic and emerging, including
theology as intellectual quest and as personal commitment, and theology becoming church
document, theology and church leadership, and theology toward societal and world issues.

Learning Outcomes
Competencies are approved when you are able to demonstrate...
- an ability to distinguish and articulate various operative theologies animating the lived
faith of congregations in the United Church
- a grasp of United Church four subordinate standards, Twenty Articles of Doctrine (1925),
A Statement of Faith (1940), A New Creed (1968, revised 1980, 1995) and A Song of
Faith (2006), how they are arrived at, and how they evolve in the changing context and
mission of the church.
- an ability to show how commissioned reports (e.g. The Authority and Interpretation of
Scripture, Mending the World, etc.) articulate the theology of the church in a timely and
contextual way.
- an understanding of the responsibility of the church leader in living one’s own theology
while teaching the theologies and doctrines of the church.
- an ability to demonstrate the dialectic of engagement and non-attachment in constructing
theologically and doctrinally-based arguments with depth and clarity.

Format
The class will meet on-site over the spring term intensive.
There will be presentations by the instructor, group work, presentations by participants and class
discussion.
This is a required course for United Church MDiv, DipCS, Testamur, and Admissions students.

Prerequisites: Normally students have completed at least one graduate course in Theology or
equivalent (Diploma students 500 level; MDiv students 600 level)
Required Text NOT AVAILABLE AT UBC BOOKSTORE please order online
• * E – Reading Package: most of the readings will be available online and others marked * will available in PDF files and at VST library.
• § Comparison of Faith Statements in the United Church of Canada (1925-2006) will be distributed in the first class.
• A few readings and other materials related to the course will be distributed in class.

Note that most United Church documents are found in public data bases:
• “ucc commons” @ https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx
• “awash in theology” @ http://ucctheology.pbworks.com/w/page/12657021/FrontPage

Students should also be aware of the United Church Journal, *Touchstone*
http://touchstonecanada.ca/

Course Policies
1. **Attendance** The course requires 100% attendance since it is an intensive course.
2. **Reading and assignments** You are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.
3. **Academic honesty** You are expected to adhere to VST’s requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
4. **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
   • Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is “Not Approved”) including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
   • Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
6. **Late assignments**
   Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.
7. **Limitation on use of social media**
   Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.
8. VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

Expectations and Assignments
1. **Class informed participation**: Class sessions are an important part of the learning experience. Because discussion is a key part of the class and nurtures an engagement with course materials, your questions and comments are valued and will be a factor in the overall grade. To this end, it is expected that you will have done the readings and be prepared to contribute.

2. **Four Short papers**: 300-500 words, each worth 15% of the course grade from February 29th through March 25th, **due in class on the day that topic will be discussed**. These topics are in this syllabus. Each paper should discuss one doctrine or topic with which you are dealing, how it has been confessed or understood in the four faith statements/ subordinate standards, reading materials and your statement of faith along with reason(s) and implication(s) what is at stake in this doctrine or topic. You are invited to discuss it in your own context or experience. Papers should be typed in single space format, Times New Roman, 12pt font and 1-inch margins.

3. **One Final Paper – Your own faith statement or creed**: four to five pages double spaced, worth 25% of the course grade **due on Monday, April 6**. In the first two to three pages you are invited to write your own faith statement or creed; You may include elements of your short papers, if appropriate, your learnings throughout the course and confessing your own faith in your specific context. Critically reflect upon the readings, class discussion and presentations used to create your own faith statement or creed. And then you are invited to explain or comment on your statement or creed in two or three pages.

4. **Audit students** are required to do all the reading and participate in the class discussions and exercises.

5. **Certificate students** are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and exercises, and do the journal, handing in the sections of the journal as listed in the calendar.

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas:
1. Completion of the reading assignments, informed participation in class discussions (15%)
2. Four short papers, each 15% (60%)
3. Final paper - faith statement or creed (25%)
Course Schedule

January 22 (Class 1): Introduction and Faith Statements
Each Christian community is called upon to confess its faith and express its mission for its time and place. What was the context of each faith statement?
What were the motivations for church union? What were the founding visions of the UCC?
What issues did William Scott face on his faith journey; what issues were missing? Write those issues and see how they were dealt in the history of the UCC.

Required Reading
- ¶ “Introduction” – John H. Young
- § Comparison of Faith Statements in the United Church of Canada (1925-2006), 1.

Case Study: William Scott’s Mission and Ministry

Suggested Reading
  https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-003-x/91-003-x2014001-eng.pdf

January 29 (Class 2): “We are not alone” – Scripture and Revelation
Do you view the Bible as the source of revelation? Why or why not? What do you think of a self-revealing God who continues to communicate with humanity? In the Twenty Articles of Doctrine, what is the understanding of revelation and how has it changed in the history of the UCC? Does the Wesleyan “Quadrilateral” understanding of our relationship with God resonate with your discerning process?
Required Reading

- ¶ 2. Scripture and Revelation in The United Church of Canada – Robert C. Fennell

Case Study: Only Jesus?

- How do you understand the scripture: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6)?

Suggested Reading


February 5 (Class 3): “We believe in God” – Trinity, Christ and Holy Spirit
What do you think of the image of Trinity as dance (Perichoresis) and its implication of it to the concept of relationship? Can we apply it to human relationships? If so, how? How has your/UCC’s understanding of Jesus been changed in relationships with other faiths? What roles does the Holy Spirit play in how God relates to the world and to us? A Song of Faith sings of the Spirit “animating all matters and energy, moving in the human heart.” If so, how?

Required Reading

- ¶ 1. The Triune God – Catherine Faith MacLean
- ¶ 5. The Christology of The United Church of Canada – Don Schweitzer
- ¶ 6. The Holy Spirit – Adrian Jacobs
Case Study: A conversation between Rev. Bill Phipps and the Ottawa Citizen


Suggested Reading

- UCC, Committee on Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations, In Whose Name?: The Baptismal Formula in Contemporary Culture – Roman Catholic/United Church of Canada Dialogue (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 2001) http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/In_Whose_Name.html

February 19 (Class 4): “We trust in God” – Creation, Sin and Redemption

Why is a “holistic approach” (p. 92) to God’s creation important? If creation was good, where did evil come from? Reflect on the significant policy shift(s) of the understanding of sin and redemption in the UCC. What is the “institutional sin” (p. 117) and how has the church tried to build right relationships?

Required Reading

- ¶ 3. The Good Creation: From Classical Theism to Ecotheology – Harold Wells
- ¶ 4. Sin and Redemption in the United Church of Canada – Sandra Beardsall

Case Study: Building Community

March 11 (Class 5): “We are called to be the Church”

Church, Ministry and Sacraments

What does it mean to say “We are called to be the Church”? What is the mission of the church in your context? What are the values of practising Christianity in a religiously pluralistic and culturally diverse society such as Canada? Did the UCC have a “double standard” (p. 215) in its mission toward non-Anglo and non-white groups? What is the role of sacramental theology in the UCC?

Case Study: Gretta Vosper Controversy


Suggested Reading


- ** UCC, Committee on Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations, In Whose Name: The Baptismal Formula in Contemporary Culture – Roman Catholic/United Church of Canada Dialogue (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 2001)
  http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/In_Whose_Name.html


March 18 (Class 6): “We are called to be the Church” II
— Mission and Relationship with Others

The Report on *World Mission* (1966) led to a paradigm shift in the UCC relationships with other faith communities. How was it possible to make such a “radical change”? Why were the policies between domestic and overseas missions different? Do you agree that the church’s overseas mission policies were more progressive? Why?

**Required Reading**

- ¶ 11. The United Church’s Mission Work within Canada and Its Impact on Indigenous and Ethnic Minority Communities – Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd

**Case Study: Cultural Sensitivity**

- Christmas Boxes: A Story from Nicaragua by Leslie Harrison

**Suggested Reading**

- UCC, Division of World Outreach, “Gender Justice and Partnership Guidelines” (1998). https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Global%20Partnership/Gender%20Justice%20and%20Partnership%20Guidelines.pdf?Mobile=1&Source=%2F%5Flayouts%2F15%2Fmobile%2Fv米兰wa%2Easpx%3FList%3D60232494%2Da08b%2D434b%2Dbbf5%2D9F4cc9e086ad%26View%3D95193ee%2D99b%2D45a7%2Db20e%2D237a86847d1c%26RootFolder%3D%252FDocuments%252FGlobal%2BPartnership%26FolderCTID%3D0x0120007BA836B06232434998A5ECF9082DDDD%26wdFCCState%3D1
- UCC, Division of World Outreach. “To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God’s People,” *Record of Proceedings of the 37th General Council* (2000). https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Global%20Partnership/Gender%20Justice%20and%20Partnership%20Guidelines.pdf?Mobile=1&Source=%2F%5Flayouts%2F15%2Fmobile%2Fv米兰wa%2Easpx%3FList%3D60232494%2Da08b%2D434b%2Dbbf5%2D9F4cc9e086ad%26View%3D95193ee%2D99b%2D45a7%2Db20e%2D237a86847d1c%26RootFolder%3D%252FDocuments%252FGlobal%2BPartnership%26FolderCTID%3D0x0120007BA836B06232434998A5ECF9082DDDD%26wdFCCState%3D1
- UCC, Division of World Outreach, “Gender Justice and Partnership Guidelines” (1998). https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Global%20Partnership/Gender%20Justice%20and%20Partnership%20Guidelines.pdf?Mobile=1&Source=%2F%5Flayouts%2F15%2Fmobile%2Fv米兰wa%2Easpx%3FList%3D60232494%2Da08b%2D434b%2Dbbf5%2D9F4cc9e086ad%26View%3D95193ee%2D99b%2D45a7%2Db20e%2D237a86847d1c%26RootFolder%3D%252FDocuments%252FGlobal%2BPartnership%26FolderCTID%3D0x0120007BA836B06232434998A5ECF9082DDDD%26wdFCCState%3D1
March 25 (Class 7): “Thanks be to God!”
What are your greatest hopes and fears as you prepare for your ministry? How is the doctrine of eschatology related to these? How has the UCC vision changed from being a “national church” to a “justice-seeking/justice-living Church”?

Required Reading

• ¶12. The End of the World as We Know It? (Eschatology) – Michael Bourgeois
• ¶ Conclusion – In Conclusion … a Work in Progress
• § Comparison of Faith Statements (1925-2006), 14.


Case Study: Are we victims of our own success?